English Toolkit: Indicator 1.1.3

Goal 1.0 Reading, Reviewing and Responding to Texts

Expectation 1.1 The student will use effective strategies before, during, and after reading, viewing, and listening to self-selected and assigned materials.

Indicator 1.1.3 The student will use after-reading strategies appropriate to both the text and purpose for reading by summarizing, comparing, contrasting, synthesizing, drawing conclusions, and validating the purpose for reading.

Assessment Limits:

Summarizing, comparing, contrasting, and synthesizing significant ideas in a text Summarizing or synthesizing significant ideas across texts and drawing conclusions based on the information in more than one text Drawing conclusions based upon information from the text Confirming the usefulness or purpose for reading the text Predicting the development, topics, or ideas that might logically be included if the text were extended

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Public Release #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Silencing the Sound of Music

Read the essay "Silencing the Sound of Music." Then answer the following.

Which conclusion about the author is most supported by information in the essay?

A. He uses music as a way of solving problems.
B. He has a great deal of knowledge about music history.
C. He enjoys music even though he has little musical talent.
D. He likes classical music more than he likes popular music.

Public Release #2 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Mussels in April
- English Resource: Mama's Pie

Use the poem "Mussels in April" and the story "Mama's Pie" to answer the following.

Which statement best expresses a main idea of both the poem "Mussels in April" and the story "Mama's Pie"?

A. As children grow older, they view their parents differently.
B. Parents are the best people to teach basic skills to children.
C. Simple experiences provide opportunities for developing family relationships.
D. Families rely on special traditions to give them strength during difficult times.

Public Release #3 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: My People and I, Too

Which of these best states the main idea of both "My People" and "I, Too"?

A. People should learn to be patient.
B. People should be proud of who they are.
C. People learn to appreciate beauty in nature.
D. People who are unhappy will grow stronger.

Public Release #4 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Unfolding Bud

Read the poem "Unfolding Bud." Then answer the following:

The main idea of "Unfolding Bud" is that poems are

A. less amazing than water lilies
B. filled with clear and obvious images
C. appreciated more fully after many readings
D. understood better by those who appreciate nature

Public Release #5 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Down with the Forests

Read the essay "Down with the Forests." Then answer the following:

Which of these statements best expresses the main idea of the concluding sentence?

A. Paper is an acceptable substitute for plastic.
B. Paper products create environmental problems.
C. National forests are essential for paper products.
D. The widespread use of paper products threatens forests.

Public Release #6 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: A Sea Worry

Read the essay "A Sea Worry." Then answer the following:

There is enough information in the essay to conclude that Joseph will most likely

A. continue to body-surf
B. go to a mainland college
C. work for a surfing magazine
D. become a professional writer

Public Release #7 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Breakfast

Read "Breakfast," the first chapter from the novel *Jim the Boy*. Then answer the following:

Jim is most likely part of his mother's sadness because he

A. refuses to help her
B. reminds her of his father
C. is difficult to take care of

D. is growing up too quickly

Public Release #8 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: A Historical Look At Anna

Now, read "A Historical Look at Anna" about the real Anna Leonowens. Then answer the following:

The details in these paragraphs mostly show that the screen and stage versions of Anna Leonowens' experiences

A. are representative of cultural differences
B. have been altered from those of her real life
C. are an interesting part of Thailand's history
D. have motivated young women to become teachers

Public Release #9 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Yes, I Can!

Read the essay "Yes, I Can!" Then answer the following.

What is the author's main point in paragraphs 1 through 10?

A. Children learn to overcome their limitations.
B. A college education makes people more realistic.
C. As students grow older, they lose their desire to learn.
D. As people age, they are less willing to risk embarrassment.

Public Release #10 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Yes, I Can!

Read the essay "Yes, I Can!" Then answer the following.

The author gave his son the "possibles bag" to

A. encourage his son to pursue his dreams
B. prepare his son for survival in the woods
C. reward his son for his good work in school
D. remind his son to enjoy his homemade possessions

Public Release #11 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: High Tide in Tucson

Read the essay "High Tide in Tucson." Then answer the following.

Which word best describes Buster in "High Tide in Tucson"?

A. adaptable
B. curious
C. peaceful
D. protective

Public Release #12 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.1.3
Handout(s):
- English Resource: Fireflies In The Garden

Read the poem "Fireflies in the Garden." Then answer the following:

According to the poem, which of these statements best explains a difference between fireflies and stars?

A. Stars are older than fireflies.
B. Fireflies are not as real as stars.
C. The light in fireflies is temporary.
D. The positions of the stars appear fixed.

Handouts

by Dan Rather

As recently as a century or so ago, if you wanted to hear music, you had better play or sing for yourself. If you wanted to hear more than that, you'd better have friends. If you wanted to hear an opera or symphony any time you wanted to, you'd better be a king.

Today, of course, all we need to do is plug in the radio or stereo. One hundred, 200 musicians at our command, any time of the day or night. In the car, at the gym, in the supermarket, anywhere we go, even places we don't want music. We can listen to musicians who aren't even alive anymore, from Patsy Cline to Elvis Presley to Maria Callas.

I have begun to wonder if our easy access to music has made it too easy for us to take music for granted.

Example: School districts feeling the pinch tend to cut music classes first, according to many experts. The reasoning apparently goes like this: Music seems like a frivolity when you compare it to chemistry labs; instruments cost a lot of money (either to the school or to the parents); and, after all, why do you think they call it an "elective"?

Well, this happens to be a subject I know something about. You see, I took music classes in public schools—the Houston Independent School District in Texas. Even then, I was no musical prodigy.[1] They put me in the rhythm band and gave me a wood block to play. I wore it on a cord around my neck and hit it with a little stick.

[6]Other children might have been expected to hit each other with the little stick. Not me. (Well, not often.) I was extremely respectful of my instrument. Scholars believe the wood block was invented *before* music. And if you needed proof of that, you had only to listen to the way I played.

About the best you could say for my performance was this: I very seldom played off-key.

I was also—don't ask how or why—assistant conductor of the Alexander Hamilton Elementary School band. To this day I can still conduct about three songs, just in case I'm at the concert hall one night and there's an emergency and somebody shouts: "Is there a conductor in the house?"

In all honesty, those little music classes didn't turn me into a musician—you'd need a *magician* to do that. But those classes did give me an appreciation of music.

- Music is difficult. It requires work and thought and sweat and inspiration. I haven't taken it for granted since.
- Music is exciting. It is truly thrilling to be sitting in a group of musicians when you are all playing (more or less) the same piece of music. You are part of a great, powerful, vibrant entity.[2] And nothing beats the feeling you get when you've practiced a difficult section over and over, and finally get it right (Yes, even on the wood block.)

And you think *you're* excited when you get that song right. Imagine how your *mother* feels. You can see it in her face: relief and pride. Big pride.

- Music is important. It says things your heart can't say any other way, and in a language everyone speaks. Music crosses borders, turns smiles to frowns, and vice versa.

These observations are shared with a hope: that, when schools cut back on music classes, they really think about what they're doing—and don't take music for granted.

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[1] prodigy: person with exceptional talents
[2] entity: something that exists as a particular and separate unit

Mussels in April[1]

by Peter Neumeyer

"All months with R,"[2] my father said
So
—come April, wearing slip-proof Keds
we'd leap the rocks,
start up the squawking gulls,
crouch, wrench, twist the bearded blueblack treasures
streaked with silver.
Once home, we'd turn the pail, discard the open,
simmer in seaweed and their own salt tears
those sealed mysteries till they gapped
and through the smallest slit, their golden eyes
would squint.
These family moments—cold outings, simmering pots,
scraped fingers, salty steam, the clickclack shells—
these rituals to my children I'll pass on;
and they'll do likewise when I'm gone.

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[1] Mussels: soft-bodied water animal that is protected by its shell; saltwater mussels live in shallow coastal waters, where they attach themselves to rocks

[2] "All months with R": a saying that means it is safe to eat shellfish during the cooler months with names containing an "R" (September through April)

by Pamela Kennedy

I was nine the summer Mama taught me how to bake a pie. It was an occasion, a rite of passage, a journey back into family history. The lesson was full of truth, pungent as our wild berries, liberally dusted with flour, and punctuated with the wooden rolling pin.

I stood next to the cutting board, my dress covered with a folded dishtowel, cinched around my middle and tied at the back.

"You take this much flour," Mama said, dumping an undisclosed amount in a large bowl, "then you add shortening—about this much." She dropped a glob of the sticky white stuff into the flour. "Now a pinch of salt. Take this pastry cutter and cut through the flour and shortening until it looks like cornmeal. Here now, you do it."

I had no idea what cornmeal looked like, but I kept cutting through the mixture, certain Mama would give me a hint when it got to the right stage. After a bit, the flour and shortening were crumbly and coarse. Mama looked at it, nodded, and announced it was time to add the water.

"You never dump water into pie dough," Mama warned. "You sprinkle it on, a tiny bit at a time. Use your hand like this."

She dipped her fingers into a cup of water and shook the drops over the mixture, tossing it now and then with a fork. When the dough could be pressed together into a crumbly ball, she stopped, took about half of the mixture out of the bowl, and pressed it together into an oval on the floured board.

"Now you roll it out," she said, "but only roll it once. Pie crust is like people—you treat them gently and they turn out tender, but if you keep pushing and pressing them, they'll turn out tough and tasteless every time."

I rolled—center to edge—all around the circle.

"Don't worry if it crumbles around the edges," Mama said, noting my frustration. "That's the best sign of a good batch!" Gently we transferred the flattened dough into the pie plate.

"Now the berries." The tart wild blackberries, frosted with sugar and flour and seeping with purple juice, tumbled into the waiting pie shell. We had picked them the day before, hunting through the burned-off growth in the woods behind the cemetery. I still bore scars from the adventure: hairline scratches laced my hands and purple stains outlined my fingernails. These berries were earned with sweat and blood and would taste all the better for our efforts.

After I rolled the top crust, Mama cut a curved line across its center. "Just like my Mama used to do," she murmured. She crimped the edges with her finger and thumb, deftly creating a scalloped border around the pie. After brushing the top crust with cream, we slipped the pie into the oven, and Mama put on the teakettle—a sign we were to have a talk.

When the china cups were filled and steaming, Mama pulled two chairs up to the table and we sat. For the first time, I sensed that Mama and I were somehow equals and I felt

special, privy to some feminine world I'd never known before. Mama stirred her tea and started to talk, introducing me to her past, the time before she was Mama.

"We were poor kids," she said, "but we never knew it. Daddy and Mama raised ten of us on a small farm where we had a little garden, a pasture, and an orchard, all surrounded by woods. We always had fresh or canned vegetables, milk from a cow, and plenty of eggs, even during the Depression. And Mama always made pies. There were green apple pies and pumpkin pies, even mince meat when one of the neighbors had good luck hunting and got a deer. But the favorite was always wild blackberry pie. We kids called them 'little creepy crawlers' because in the woods behind our house, the vines crept along the forest floor, tangling themselves around stumps and over stones. We'd clamber through the prickly vines, searching for the sweet, dark berries and plopping them into our tin lard buckets. The smell of the berries, warm from the sun, was heavenly; and we ate as many as we saved, staining our fingers and lips with the purple juice.

"My mother baked the pies as soon as we returned with the fruit. She always hummed while she baked, flour dust rising about her like a cloud and settling on her hair and faded cotton dress."

"Is that when you learned how to bake pies, Mama?" I asked, trying to imagine my mother as a young girl, scratched and stained with berry juice and filled with the same insecurities and sense of wonder as I.

"Yes," Mama said, and her lips curved in a smile, soft with remembrance. "I was just about your age, and I remember I had to stand on an apple crate to reach the counter top."

The fragrance of the baking pie wound around us, casting a spell of homey intimacy as we sipped our tea, sharing our heritage until the timer interrupted us with a rude buzz. As we removed the steaming pie from the oven, Mama sighed with satisfaction and said, "There, now that's a job well done." And somehow I know she meant more than just the baking of the pie.

The summer afternoon of my first pie was more than thirty years ago, and yet its memories are as sweet and real as the berries in the bowl before me. I think it's time to call my daughter in from play and show her how to bake a pie. Perhaps we'll sit and share a cup of tea while it bakes, and I will tell her how her great-grandma used to bake a pie.

My People

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

—Langston Hughes

Unfolding Bud

One is amazed
By a water-lily bud
Unfolding
With each passing day,
Taking on a richer color
And new dimensions.

One is not amazed
At first glance,
By a poem,
Which is as tight-closed
As a tiny bud.

Yet one is surprised
To see the poem
Gradually unfolding,
Revealing its rich inner self,
As one reads it
Again
And over again.

Naoshi Koriyama

Down with the Forests

by Charles Kuralt

BALTIMORE MARYLAND. I was waiting for breakfast in a coffee shop the other morning and reading the paper. The paper had sixty-six pages. The waitress brought a paper placemat and a paper napkin and took my order, and I paged through the paper.

The headline said, "House Panel Studies a Bill Allowing Clear-Cutting in U.S. Forests."

I put the paper napkin in my lap, spread the paper out on the paper placemat, and read on: "The House Agriculture Committee," it said, "is looking over legislation that would once again open national forests to the clear-cutting of trees by private companies under government permits."

The waitress brought the coffee. I opened a paper sugar envelope and tore open a little paper cup of cream and went on reading the paper: "The Senate voted without dissent yesterday to allow clear-cutting," the paper said. "Critics have said clear-cutting in the national forests can lead to erosion and destruction of wildlife habitats. Forest Service and industry spokesmen said a flat ban on clear-cutting would bring paralysis to the lumber industry." And to the paper industry, I thought. Clear-cutting a forest is one way to get a lot of paper, and we sure seem to need a lot of paper.

The waitress brought the toast. I looked for the butter. It came on a little paper tray with a covering of paper. I opened a paper package of marmalade and read on: "Senator Jennings Randolph, Democrat of West Virginia, urged his colleagues to take a more restrictive view and permit clear-cutting only under specific guidelines for certain types of forest. But neither he nor anyone else voted against the bill, which was sent to the House on a 90 to 0 vote."

The eggs came, with little paper packages of salt and pepper. I finished breakfast, put the paper under my arm, and left the table with its used and useless paper napkin, paper placemat, paper salt and pepper packages, paper butter and marmalade wrappings, paper sugar envelope, and paper cream holder, and I walked out into the morning wondering how our national forests can ever survive our breakfasts.

A Sea Worry

by Maxine Hong Kingston

THIS SUMMER MY SON body-surfs. He says it's his "job" and rises each morning at 5:30 to catch the bus to Sandy Beach. I hope that by September he will have had enough of the ocean. Tall waves throw surfers against the shallow bottom. Undertows have snatched them away. Sharks prowl Sandy's. Joseph told me that once he got out of the water because he saw an enormous shark. "Did you tell the lifeguard?" I asked. "No." "Why not?" "I didn't want to spoil the surfing." The ocean pulls at the boys, who turn into surfing addicts. At sunset you can see the surfers waiting for the last golden wave.

"Why do you go surfing so often?" I ask my students.

"It feels so good," they say. "Inside the tube, I can't describe it. There are no words for it."

"You can describe it," I scold, and I am very angry. "Everything can be described. Find the words for it, you lazy boy. Why don't you go home and read?" I am afraid that the boys give themselves up to the ocean's mindlessness.

When the waves are up, surfers all over Hawaii don't do their homework. They cut school. They know how the surf is breaking at any moment because every fifteen minutes the reports come over the radio; in fact, one of my former students is the surf reporter.

Some boys leave for mainland colleges, and write their parents heart-rending letters. They beg to come home for Thanksgiving. "If I can just touch the ocean," they write from Missouri and Kansas, "I'll last for the rest of the semester." Some come home for Christmas and don't go back.

Even when the assignment is about something else, the students write about surfing. They try to describe what it is to be inside the wave as it curls over them. Making a tube or "chamber" or "green room" or "pipeline" or "time warp." They write about the silence, the peace, "no hassles," the feeling of being reborn as they shoot out the end. They've written about the perfect wave. Their writing is full of clichés. "The endless summer," they say. "Unreal."

Surfing is like a religion. Among the martyrs are George Helm, Kimo Mitchell, and Eddie Aikau. Helm and Mitchell were lost at sea riding their surfboards from Kaho'olawe, where they had gone to protest the Navy's bombing of that island. Eddie Aikau was a champion surfer and lifeguard. A storm had capsized the *Hokule'a*, the ship that traced the route that the Polynesian ancestors sailed from Tahiti, and Eddie Aikau had set out on his board to get help.

Since the ocean captivates our son, we decided to go with him to Sandy's.

[10]We got up before dawn, picked up his friend, Marty, and drove out of Honolulu. Almost all the traffic was going in the opposite direction, the freeway coned to make more lanes into the city. We came to a place where raw mountains rose on our left and the sea fell on our right, smashing against the cliffs. The strip of cliff pulverized into sand is Sandy's. "Dangerous Current Exist," said the ungrammatical sign.

Earll and I sat on the shore with our blankets and thermos of coffee. Joseph and Marty put on their fins and stood at the edge of the sea for a moment, touching the water with their fingers and crossing their hearts before going in. There were fifteen boys out there, all about the same age, fourteen to twenty, all with the same kind of lean v-shaped build, most of them with black hair that made their wet heads look like sea lions. It was hard to tell whether our kid was one of those who popped up after a big wave. A few had surfboards, which are against the rules at a body-surfing beach, but the lifeguard wasn't on duty that day.

As they watched for the next wave the boys turned toward the ocean. They gazed slightly upward; I thought of altar boys before a great god. When a good wave arrived, they turned, faced shore, and came shooting in, some taking the wave to the right and some to the left, their bodies fish-like, one arm out in front, the hand and fingers pointed before them, like a swordfish's beak. A few held credit card trays, and some slid in on trays from McDonald's.

"That is no country for middle-aged women," I said. We had on bathing suits underneath our clothes in case we felt moved to participate. There were no older men either.

Even from the shore, we could see inside the tubes. Sometimes, when they came at an angle, we saw into them a long way. When the wave dug into the sand, it formed a brown tube or a golden one. The magic ones, though, were made out of just water, green and turquoise rooms, translucent walls and ceiling. I saw one that was powder-blue, perfect, thin; the sun filled it with sky blue and white light. The best thing, the kids say, is when you are in the middle of the tube, and there is water all around you but you're dry.

The waves came in sets; the boys passed up the smaller ones. Inside a big one, you could see their bodies hanging upright, knees bent, duckfeet fins paddling, bodies dangling there in the wave.

Once in a while, we heard a boy yell, "Aa-whoo!" "Poon tah!" "Aaroo!" And then we noticed how rare a human voice was here; the surfers did not talk, but silently, silently rode the waves.

Since Joseph and Marty were considerate of us, they stopped after two hours, and we took them out for breakfast. We kept asking them how it felt, so they would not lose language.

"Like a stairwell in an apartment building," said Joseph, which I liked immensely. He hasn't been in very many apartment buildings, so had to reach a bit to get the simile. "I saw somebody I knew coming toward me in the tube, and I shouted, 'Jeff. Hey Jeff,' and my voice echoed like a stairwell in an apartment building. Jeff and I came straight at each other—mirror tube."

"Are there ever girls out there?" Earll asked. "There's a few who come out at about eleven," said Marty.

"How old are they?"

"About twenty."

"Why do you cross your heart with water?"

"So the ocean doesn't kill us."

I describe the powder-blue tube I had seen.

"That part of Sandy's is called Chambers," they said.

I am relieved that the surfers keep asking one another for descriptions. I also find some comfort in the stream of commuter traffic, cars filled with men over twenty, passing Sandy Beach on their way to work.

A Historical Look At Anna

It is a wonderful story. The widow of a dashing military man enters the exotic world of a foreign court. There, she matches wits with the King, a charismatic leader torn between the ancient tradition of his country and the demands of the modern world. The young widow shows him a vibrant path to a better future, thus influencing generations to come.

This is the story of Anna Leonowens, as it has come down to us in Anna's two books, the musical *The King and I*, and the 1999 film starring Jodie Foster. It is an exciting true-life story, except for one problem—it isn't true. In fact, the story has so many inaccuracies that the Thai government—Thailand is the modern Siam—did not allow *The King and I* to be shown within its borders.

Despite—or perhaps because of—the bendable facts of her story, Anna is an interesting study in grit and resourcefulness. Later in life, she moved to Canada, where she helped to found numerous important cultural institutions. She died in Montreal in 1915.

Yes, I Can!

by Robert Fulghum

OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF years I have been a frequent guest in schools, most often invited by kindergartens and colleges. The environments differ only in scale. In the beginners' classroom and on university campuses the same opportunities and facilities exist. Tools for reading and writing are there—words and numbers; areas devoted to scientific experiment—labs and work boxes; and those things necessary for the arts—paint, music, costumes, room to dance—likewise present and available. In kindergarten, however, the resources are in one room, with access for all. In college, the resources are in separate buildings, with limited availability. But the most apparent difference is in the self-image of the students.

Ask a kindergarten class, "How many of you can draw?" and all hands shoot up. Yes, of course we can draw—all of us. What can you draw? Anything! How about a dog eating a fire truck in a jungle? Sure! How big you want it?

How many of you can sing? All hands. Of course we sing! What can you sing? Anything! What if you don't know the words? No problem, we make them up. Let's sing! Now? Why not!

How many of you dance? Unanimous again. What kind of music do you like to dance to? Any kind! Let's dance! Now? Sure, why not?

[5]Do you like to act in plays? Yes! Do you play musical instruments? Yes! Do you write poetry? Yes! Can you read and write and count? Yes! We're learning that stuff now.

Their answer is Yes! Over and over again, Yes! The children are confident in spirit, infinite in resources, and eager to learn. Everything is still possible.

Try those same questions on a college audience. A small percentage of the students will raise their hands when asked if they draw or dance or sing or paint or act or play an instrument. Not infrequently, those who do raise their hands will want to qualify their response with their limitations: "I only play piano, I only draw horses, I only dance to rock and roll, I only sing in the shower."

When asked why the limitations, college students answer they do not have talent, are not majoring in the subject, or have not done any of these things since about third grade, or worse, that they are embarrassed for others to see them sing or dance or act. You can imagine the response to the same questions asked of an older audience. The answer: No, none of the above.

What went wrong between kindergarten and college?

[10]What happened to YES! of course I can?

On the occasion of his graduation from engineering college last June, I gave my number-two son a gift of a "possibles bag."

The frontiersmen who first entered the American West were a long way from the resources of civilization for long periods of time. No matter what gear and supplies they started out with, they knew that sooner or later these would run out and they would have to rely on essentials.

These essentials they called their "possibles"—with these items they could survive, even prevail, against all odds. In a small leather bag strung around their neck they carried a brass case containing flint and steel and tinder to make fire. A knife on their belt, powder and shot, and a gun completed their possibles.

Many survived even when all these items were lost or stolen.

Because their real possibles were contained in a skin bag carried just behind their eyeballs. The lore of the wilderness won by experience, imagination, courage, dreams, and self-confidence. These were the essentials that armed them when all else failed.

I gave my son a replica of the frontiersmen's possibles bag to remind him of this attitude. In a sheepskin sack I placed flint and steel and tinder, that he might make his own fire when necessary; a Swiss Army knife—the biggest one with the most tools; a small lacquer box that contained a wishbone I saved from a Thanksgiving turkey—for luck. Invisible in the possibles bag were his father's hopes and his father's blessing. The idea of the possibles bag was the real gift. He will add his own possibles to what I've given him.

His engineering degree simply attests that he has come back home from an adventure in the great wilderness of science. He has claimed a clearing in the woods as his own.

The sheepskin sack is to remind him that the possibles bag inside his head is what took him there, brought him back, and will send him forth with confidence again and again and yet again, in that spirit of "Yes, I can!"

High Tide in Tucson

by Barbara Kingsolver

A hermit crab lives in my house. Here in the desert he's hiding out from local animal ordinances, at minimum, and maybe even the international laws of native-species transport. For sure, he's an outlaw against nature. So be it.

[2]He arrived as a stowaway two Octobers ago. I had spent a week in the Bahamas, and while I was there, wishing my daughter could see those sparkling blue bays and sandy coves, I did exactly what she would have done: I collected shells. Spiky murexes, smooth purple moon shells, ancient-looking whelks sand-blasted by the tide—I tucked them in the pockets of my shirt and shorts until my lumpy, suspect hemlines gave me away, like a refugee smuggling the family fortune. When it was time to go home, I rinsed my loot in the sink and packed it carefully into a plastic carton, then nested it deep in my suitcase for the journey to Arizona.

I got home in the middle of the night, but couldn't wait till morning to show my hand. I set the carton on the coffee table for my daughter to open. In the dark living room her face glowed, in the way of antique stories about children and treasure. With perfect delicacy she laid the shells out on the table, counting, sorting, designating scientific categories like yellow-striped pinky, Barnacle Bill's pocketbook…Yeek! She let loose a sudden yelp, dropped her booty,[1] and ran to the far end of the room. The largest, knottiest whelk had begun to move around. First it extended one long red talon of a leg, tap-tap-tapping like a blind man's cane. Then came half a dozen more red legs, plus a pair of eyes on stalks, and a purple claw that snapped open and shut in a way that could not mean: We Come in Friendship.

Who could blame this creature? It had fallen asleep to the sound of the Caribbean tide and awakened on a coffee table in Tucson, Arizona, where the nearest standing water source of any real account was the municipal sewage-treatment plant.

With red stiletto legs splayed in all directions, it lunged and jerked its huge shell this way and that, reminding me of the scene I make whenever I'm moved to rearrange the living room sofa by myself. Then, while we watched in stunned reverence, the strange beast found its bearings and began to reveal a determined, crabby grace. It felt its way to the edge of the table and eased itself over, not falling bang to the floor but hanging suspended underneath within the long grasp of its ice-tong legs, lifting any two or three at a time while many others still held in place. In this remarkable fashion it scrambled around the underside of the table's rim, swift and sure and fearless like a rock climber's dream.

If you ask me, when something extraordinary shows up in your life in the middle of the night, you give it a name and make it the best home you can.

The business of naming involved a grasp of hermit-crab gender that was way out of our league. But our household had a deficit of males, so my daughter and I chose Buster, for balance. We gave him a terrarium with clean gravel and a small cactus plant dug out of the yard and a big cockleshell full of tap water. All this seemed to suit him fine. To my astonishment our local pet store carried a product called Vitaminized Hermit Crab Cakes. Tempting enough (till you read the ingredients) but we passed, since our household leans more toward the recycling ethic. We give him leftovers. Buster's rapture is the day I drag the unidentifiable things in cottage cheese containers out of the back of the fridge.

We've also learned to give him a continually changing assortment of seashells, which he tries on and casts off like Cinderella's stepsisters preening for the ball. He'll sometimes try to squeeze into ludicrous outfits too small to contain him (who can't relate?). In other moods, he will disappear into a conch the size of my two fists and sit for a day, immobilized by the weight of upward mobility. He is in every way the perfect housemate: quiet, entertaining, and willing to eat up the trash. He went to school for first-grade show-and-tell, and was such a hit the principal called up to congratulate me (I think) for being a broad-minded mother.

It was a long time, though, before we began to understand the content of Buster's character. He required more patient observation than we were in the habit of giving to a small, cold-blooded life. As months went by, we would periodically notice with great disappointment that Buster seemed to be dead. Or not entirely dead, but ill, or maybe suffering the crab equivalent of the blues. He would burrow into a gravelly corner, shrink deep into his shell, and not move, for days and days. We'd take him out to play, dunk him in water, offer him a new frock—nothing. He wanted to be still.

Life being what it is, we'd eventually quit prodding our sick friend to cheer up, and would move on to the next stage of a difficult friendship: neglect. We'd ignore him wholesale, only to realize at some point later on that he'd lapsed into hyperactivity. We'd find him ceaselessly patrolling the four corners of his world, turning over rocks, rooting out and dragging around truly disgusting pork-movementschop bones, digging up his cactus and replanting it on its head. At night when the household fell silent I would lie in bed listening to his methodical pebbly racket from the opposite end of the house.

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[1] booty: treasures

English Indicator 1.1.3
Answer Key

Public Release Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005
C. He enjoys music even though he has little musical talent.

Public Release Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005
C. Simple experiences provide opportunities for developing family relationships.

Public Release Item #3 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005
B. People should be proud of who they are.

Public Release Item #4 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007
C. appreciated more fully after many readings

Public Release Item #5 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007
D. The widespread use of paper products threatens forests.

Public Release Item #6 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007
A. continue to body-surf

Public Release Item #7 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
B. reminds her of his father

Public Release Item #8 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
B. have been altered from those of her real life

Public Release Item #9 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
D. As people age, they are less willing to risk embarrassment.

Public Release Item #10 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
A. encourage his son to pursue his dreams

Public Release Item #11 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
A. adaptable

Public Release Item #12 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007
C. The light in fireflies is temporary.